

# A P R O P O S A L,

*Humbly offered to the Consideration of the PARLIAMENT, that no Leather  
may be Exported Unmanufactured.*



**I** H A T the Act for Transportation of Leather Unmanufactured, may be repealed, or at least not renewed after the expiration thereof.

There would never have been any necessity for this Act, had it not been, that vast quantities of Hides are Imported from *Ireland*, which brings down the price of our *English* Hides. And for the Stage-Coaches, their hindering the Consumption of that Leather in *England*, which, before they set up, was used for Boots, Saddles, Portmantues, Hat-cases, Holsters, Belts, Girts, Reins, Stirrup-Leathers, and many other things, now become almost useles.

The making whereof, for Home-service, and Foreign-Consumption, employed about 100000 Families, whose Livelihood depended upon the Manufacturing of Leather, whereby they got Money, with which they maintained their Families, spent five or six good Joins of Meat in a Week in their Houses, and wore good Clothes, thereby occasioning the Consumption of great quantities of the Provisions and Manufactures of the Kingdom, more than now are consumed. Till this Act passed, it was Felony to Transport Leather Unmanufactured, and then *France, Spain, Germany*, and other parts, who could not be without our Leather, had vast quantities of Boots, Shoes, and Saddles, with their Appurtenances, Portmantues, Hat-Cases, Holsters, Trunks, &c. from *England*; by the making whereof, many thousands of Families got a handsome subsistence, and grew rich; But Stage-Coaches hindring the Consumption at home, as aforesaid; and *Irish* Hides being Imported into *England*, and also great quantities from *Ireland*, Exported to Foreign Parts, our Hides fell in their price in *England*. The Question then arose, how to raise them to their ancient value; and it was by the Parliament conceived, that giving a liberty to Transport the same Unmanufactured, might answer the end proposed; therefore an Act for that purpose was passed.

But sad hath been, and yet is, the consequence thereof: For, ever since that liberty given, the best of our Leather is constantly bought up, and Transported beyond Seas Unmanufactured; Foreigners, who formerly were supplied with Leather wrought here, will not Buy, or carry over a Penny-worth, that is Manufactured; so that all those poor People, who served Apprenticeships to learn their Trades, and whose Trade depended upon Manufacturing for Foreign Consumption, are undone; they that kept 20 or 30 Journey-men at Work every day, cannot now, (though eminent men of their own Trades) keep two; by means whereof, upon computation, at least 50000 Men and their Families Livelihoods are wholly taken away, and they so impoverished, that they are ready to receive Alms of the several Parishes wherein they live; whilst in the mean time Foreigners grow Rich, by Manufacturing one of the Staple Commodities of this Kingdom; and whereas till this Act passed, all our old Boots and Shoes were bought up, mended here, and then sent beyond the Seas, and there worn.

The Case is now otherwise; For the best of our Leather is not only Bought up and Transported Unmanufactured and wrought beyond Seas; but when it is wrought, it is then Imported back, and vended here, to the great prejudice and discouragement of Manufacturers in *England*, who have many of them been forced (as great a want of People as there is in *England*) to Transport themselves beyond the Seas, for want of Work at home, and there have taught their Art to Foreigners. What then doth naturally follow all these things? What Consequence can be drawn from hence, but this, that instead of 500 *l.* worth of Leather, formerly sent beyond Seas Manufactured, we send now as much Leather, but it is not worth above 100 *l.* because the same is carried over unwrought: By which means our Manufacturers lose 400 *l.* which they should have gotten, if the Leather had been Cut and Wrought in *England*, and so thereby we grow poor; and Foreigners grow rich, by gaining that 400 *l.* which our Manufacturers lose.

But this is not all; For, most of our Leather that is Exported, goes into *France*, with whom we never were able to keep up a Ballance of Trade, but have Traded with them for ready Money, (they taking little or none of the Manufactures of *England* in exchange for their Commodities.) By a moderate computation, from the best Intelligence I can get, *France* receives from *England* 30000 *l.* worth of our Leather every year, which they cannot be without (for, our Leather-Manufacture, was the only Manufacture that they were forced to be holden unto us for.) 30000 *l.* worth of our Leather Manufactured, was worth in *France* 120000 *l.* then at least 70000 *l.* of that went into our Manufacturers Pockets, the rest to the Merchants, and what our Manufacturers got, was spent in the Provisions and Manufactures of the Kingdom; which being consumed, bare a better rate than now, and helpt to keep up the Rents of Lands.

This Money we not only now lose, to our Impoverishment, and the *French* get, to their Inriching; but considering that we now import as much (nay far more) of *French* Goods into *England* than we did formerly, and taking it for granted, that when we transported the most that ever we did, yet could not a Ballance of Trade be kept up between the two Kingdoms, but our ready Money went for a great part of the Goods Imported; then must it naturally follow, that by sending our Leather Unmanufactured, which formerly was Manufactured, we must send over nigh 100000 *l.* more in ready Money, than formerly we did, (or need to do, were it not for this Act) which furnisheth *France* with our Coyn, to pay their Workmen for Manufacturing of our Staple-Commodities, and greatly exhausteth the Treasure of this Kingdom; But if this Act be repealed, and *Ireland*'s Transporting of Raw Hides be prevented, then *France*, and other Foreigners must have Leather from *England* Manufactured, as formerly they had, whereby our Handicraft Tradesmen would be set at work, and having work, would live handsomely, as formerly they did, to consume the Provisions and Manufactures of the Kingdom: So that to any rational man it must be apparent, that this Act hath not answered the end designed, nor raised the price of Hides, as expected, nor can it, for *Ireland* Transporting vast quantities of raw Hides beyond the Seas, and Importing great quantities of their Hides into *England*, as aforesaid, hinders the sale of our Hides or Tanned Leather at any considerable rates, either at home, or to Foreigners, because we want a Consumption at home; and Foreigners chuse to buy their raw Hides rather than our Leather, by reason they can purchase them at a third part of the price we can afford to sell ours at, and by Tanning of them, employ their own Bark; which is a great mischief to the Gentry in *England*, whose Bark, by reason thereof, sells at very low rates.